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# WHAT MEANS THE LAST MOSCOW TRIAL

• Yvon

**N**OW THAT THERE is no longer any hope that the emotion evoked outside of Russia by the last Moscow trial might restrain the executioner's hand, it is possible to react to the Moscow "mystery" with cold reason.

The last show was like the preceding ones, even in detail. The entire series, including the trials that are to follow, might be summarized as follows:

1. Having acquired political power by violence, the old Bolsheviks started to eliminate one another.
2. This contest of elimination ends with the strongest systematically and pitilessly exterminating his brothers-in-arms.
3. The accusations are unbelievable, but the attitude of the accused is even less comprehensible.

How shall we explain the astounding mess?

Several kinds of explanations are current. To some people Stalin and his trials represent the "Workers' and Peasants' revolution defending itself." But should we even admit that this revolution could have reached a point where it has to defend itself against *all its leaders*, there remains the fact that the standard of living of the Russian people and the absence of liberty in the USSR do not even permit one to imagine the possible existence of a direct relation between the desire of the people and the acts of their government.

To others, on the contrary, Stalin represents the counter-revolution exterminating the real revolutionaries. Now it would be very difficult to reach some agreement concerning the identity of the "real revolutionists." Are they the Rights or the Lefts? Besides, it is quite undeniable that the victims themselves have created, complete in all parts, the repulsive regime of oppression—the Party dictatorship—that is destroying them today. They themselves—alas—have used it before unstintingly against the Mensheviks, the S.R., the anarchists, the several worker oppositions, the Kronstadt sailors and the various dissident communist trends.

Then, the most pessimist—or should we call them the most optimist?—aver that Stalin, seeing the ruin of the country, the steady sinking of the national economy, the bankruptcy of the Soviet political system, is now killing his rivals in order to excuse his own mistakes. We do not doubt that Stalin's dictatorship will disappear some day, and perhaps in a very dramatic fashion. However, similar hopes have been cherished in regards to the USSR for the last twenty years; and for the last ten years, similar wistful formulations have been conjured up concerning the Stalinist era.

Finally, some good people—apparently at the end of their wits—explain the killings by concluding that Stalin has simply gone off his head, or that he is a vulgar assassin, an "oriental maniac," etc. Everything, however goes to show that he now has collectivized the Russian countryside, industrialized and armed the country, put the "old guard" and all the Communist Parties of the world under his heel, is a cool-headed realist, an executor of heroic scope. Indeed, Stalin's crafty, brutal, rancorous side has nothing about it to please delicate souls. But historic phenomena cannot seriously be accounted for in this manner. Russia, bestriding both Asia and Europe, presents a

psychological problem that is hardly near a solution. The significance given to the word "Asiatic" is too incomplete and one-sided. And when limited to the meaning of "ferocity," it has no more value than the nebulous formula labelled "Slav soul."

The small intrigues within the Kremlin—which remain quite unknown, despite several recent "revelations"—merely reflect the Trials. They do not explain them.

To find an explanation, we must determine the bonds joining such happenings to the whole course of the Russian Revolution. And we must distinguish the particular twist given to this course by Bolshevism.

The Russian Revolution, begun in 1917, is practically ended. A new society has been rising slowly. It is new in things material as well as in mental outlook. It is not the one that people expected. Here lies the tragedy.

The *bourgeois* capitalist is gone. There is a "planned economy" and centralized social organization. There is collective (State) ownership of the means of production and of the product. However, only a small minority enjoy this collective property, though the immense majority of the population keeps up and is taught to respect this State property. A new élite, consisting of "responsibles," high officials and specialists, dominant in all spheres of the Soviet economic and political activity, has taken the advantageous social position formerly occupied by the landowners and bourgeois. The State supplies these worthies with privileged incomes in the form of large salaries and the comforts that in the USSR go with high offices.

This transformation has been accomplished discreetly, under the cover of *revolutionary phrases*. It is still veiled today by the circumstance that the new privileged strata hail largely from the people, from the working class in particular.

These real heirs to the revolution, unhampered by the revolutionary past, hold the concrete levers of power in their hands, though the political semblance of power remains in the Party apparatus. By the force of circumstance, as well as by the logic of its own action, the Party has moulted, after a brief "proletarian" period, into an involuntary guardian of the new privileged class. Today the Party has the status of an usurper, who has either to submit or disappear. The new boss in the Soviet enterprise is often a Party member. But he is that only by calculation, for the sake of form. He is not interested in any communism. He is above all interested in himself.

Indeed, the Soviet society is new. It is new in its material organization, but it is as *old* as the world in its injustice and exploitation. The old Bolsheviks, with Lenin at their head, were the first to recognize this deceptive reality. They understood that the proletariat was only delegating the most active from its own ranks to replace the former exploiters. But having lost their faith in the test of experience, they did not dare to confess this publicly. They had acquired power. Having lost the generous reasons for holding this power, they became its prisoners. Little by little their consciousness of the transitory character of their role diminished their intellectual mastery. Not daring to examine the principal problem—what was happening in their Russia?—they finished up by wasting themselves in discussion and squabbles over secondary questions. This attempt at *adaptation* to the reality of the situation transpired under the cover of a scholasticism chock-full of falsehoods and has, so far, succeeded in putting observers on the wrong scent. But it also hastened the decomposition of the old revolutionists.



This tragic state of affairs was aggravated by the fundamental amorality of Bolshevism.

The Bolsheviks have always ridiculed as idealists, fools and romantics, persons who sacrifice themselves for the sake of honor and revolutionists who put probity and loyalty on the same plane as the aim of their activity itself. We shall never understand what is happening at their trials if we do not grasp the peculiar mentality of the old Bolsheviks.

Their ethics were always the least "moral." For years before the revolution, *all* means were considered good not only in the struggle against Tsarism but also against other revolutionary parties. After 1917, *all* means were employed to eliminate and exterminate the non-Bolshevik revolutionary tendencies in Russia.

Since 1920-21, *all* means were admissible in winning the absolute dictatorship over the Communist International and in their attempts to "capture" the international labor movement. The former heroism of the Bolsheviks has nothing of the sentimental or spontaneous about it. It was based entirely on intellectual (they called it "scientific") confidence that they would get to the top. The collapse of this confidence did not help to encourage in the accused any reasons for heroism.

For decades, the old Bolsheviks grounded themselves systematically on the theory and practice that the end justifies the means, and that this end can only be "concrete." Long before Stalin's ascendancy, the adverb "objectively" was utilized widely to get rid of political opponents. The Kronstadt sailors were shot down in 1921, for having "objectively aided the Whites, in spite of their good intentions."<sup>1</sup> In the days of old Lenin himself, the first Party oppositions were cruelly suppressed under the pretext that "objectively they strengthened the counter-revolution."

After this long treacherous struggle against others, how was it possible not to employ the same means when the struggle became one among the Bolsheviks themselves? Methods, even more than theories, have their inexorable logic.

The historic role of the Bolsheviks was to take power and to protect the rise of the new privileged class. Once their task was achieved, the Bolsheviks had to disappear. The old fellows refused to resign themselves to this fate. They tried not to let go, to fasten themselves to the artificial power they still exercised. They had lost their faith, and they found themselves incapable of constructing for themselves another ideal. Nothing more could nourish their solidarity. They end by destroying one another.

In this terrible struggle, everything goes: demagoguery, lies, hypocrisy, ferocity.

With the sole aim of gaining time, of waiting for more favorable circumstances, and encouraging such circumstances, the defeated Bolsheviks recanted publicly several times. They agreed to play the parts given to them in these comedy-trials, because small as it was, it was their only chance. In this attitude of theirs, they did not recognize, to the extent that we do, a condition of moral debasement. There was always talk of a "last sacrifice to the Party." It is true that the *esprit de corps* was greatly developed among the Bolsheviks. But the denunciations that were common in the course of the trials (and outside) do not disclose any signs of a fine morale. The prostration of the accused reveals rather the emptiness of their hearts, their lack of courage. If they had possessed a profound reason for shouting out

their faith in themselves, would they have—all!—been able to keep silent?

Their conqueror deceived them till the last. That seems odious. However, everything in this drama was just that—deceit.

The fact that Stalin felt the need of staging such incoherent shows is a specific manifestation of the absence of norms in that country. Such a condition of disequilibrium as a mark of all great social overturns.

We hope that the tragic and treacherous end of the old Bolsheviks will open eyes in the West. But we must not delude ourselves into expecting repercussions in Russia itself. The last trial, like the preceding ones, has hardly touched public opinion over there. Deceived and weary, the Russian people are no longer interested in political struggles. Their heavy measure of misery has deadened in them the feeling of dignity. The youth is too occupied in grubbing for themselves "places in the sun." And in none of the old Bolsheviks do the Soviet parvenus see their representative. Deep in their hearts, they may even be glad that there remains only one of the old fellows. A simple accident will suffice to have also political power slip down to them, the real masters.

The recent purge of the Red Army has a different significance. Here Stalin was more discreet and, we believe, more prudent. He rid himself of the plotters, but nothing suggests that he has alienated from himself the support of the military. The old Bolsheviks were a declining force. The Army is a rising force. The first were sacrificial victims; the latter, excepting for the actual plotters, were showered with honors. A general amnesty was decreed for all military men sentenced to less than three years of detention (excepting those held for crimes against the State). About *ten thousand* officers received the medal commemorating the two decades of the Red Army. *One thousand six hundred* (without counting the small fry) were decorated with various Soviet orders. All of this happened between the 22nd of February and the 9th of March, that is, at the time of the Trial of the Twenty-one.

This is the real political game played today in the USSR. It is a game which Stalin himself can continue to take part in only by submitting to its rules.

## THE SPANISH TRAGEDY

• Xandu

THE NAZI occupation of Austria was echoed by the conclusion of a long delayed "amity" agreement between Italy and Great Britain. But even before the publication of the terms of the pact, the hopes of Loyalist Spain for French intervention were extinguished by the fall of the Blum cabinet and the victorious drive of the Franco forces through the always unsafe Aragon front to the Mediterranean coast. Moving on armaments, newly furnished by Italy, the Rebel offensive cut the Republican territory into two. In April, the end seemed near.

We can guess what this means. Not many of the Loyalist combatants can escape to France. There will be man hunts and executions of known Republicans and radicals. But that cannot go on for long. For a government that wants to rule, it is impossible to continue killing and even filling concentration camps. Franco's government will attempt to reach some compromise with the Spanish people. There may be a plebiscite or the promise of early elections. Allowances will even be made

<sup>1</sup>Out-vishinskyng Vishinsky, in a somewhat sloppy and vulgar manner, the New York partisans of the Soviet pretender, Leon Trotsky, have recently built up a "case" to explain away the butchery of the Kronstadt sailors (and the shooting of the hundreds of sailor prisoners in the famous cellars after the "insurrection" was over). They too rely on the trusty adverb "objectively."—Ed.



for a respectable, circumspect opposition. Under Primo de Rivera, the Socialist Party of Spain, was permitted to function, and its trade-union counterpart the U.G.T. under Caballero's chieftainship, was encouraged, as against the Syndicalist organization, which was driven underground. It is certain that the U.G.T. will not survive this time. However, an attempt will probably be made to reorganize a national labor union organization on the Italian model. British financial aid gave to the revolting generals what appears at this moment to be the beginning of a final victory. The new dictatorship will continue to depend on Great Britain. Only British money can liquidate Franco's Nazi and Italian commitments. The British will insist on certain liberal forms. There are always the feelings of the King's loyal opposition to be considered by a British government. Towards the end, Labor in Westminster was getting very indignant about the cruelties of the Spanish rebels and the battle of democracy.

Salazar's Portugal is a model of what we may expect in Spain in case Franco's victory is conclusive. There is certain to be more killings in Spain, as the opposition will continue underground and may not be entirely extinguished in the field. The only basis for popular support that a dictatorship like Franco's can hope to find immediately is by the way of the Catholic Church. Therefore, an attempt will be made by the Free Masonic generals to set up a clerical-fascist set-up similar to that which existed in Austria before the Nazi conquest. The hold of the Church on the Spanish people has been loosened. But the country is probably still largely Catholic today.

"The peasant revolution that began on July 19, will not be unmade even by Franco." In his endeavor to win the population, the insurgent government will legalize most of the seizures of land by the peasants. The overturn of the clerical-conservative governments of the past were caused by the discontent of the rural population of Spain. Will not the new dictators take this into consideration? It will, if for any reasons then to consolidate their position to lay the foundation for their larger ambitions. While Franco and his set are the tools of outsiders, they also have distinctly national, Spanish, ambitions. They like to dream of a Spain that will again be an important power on the world scene, with themselves bossing things, of course. That is why in a struggle between Italy and Great Britain over the protectorate of the peninsula, Britain, which has money for the development of the country and will allow for national independence, is certain to come out the winner. Italy, too, needs English money.

Is then the cause of republican Spain lost?

Looking back to July 1936, it appears now it was lost when the big powers, including of course the so-called democratic States and the USSR, signed the neutrality "pledge." The Soviet Union was the first to sign. Doing so, the Soviet diplomats thought they were making secure the loose Russo-French agreement of mutual defence. They had the idea they had acquired thereby a weapon by which to prod Great Britain into entering this alliance. It soon became evident that the neutrality pact was a weapon also for the other side, for Hitler and Mussolini. Manipulating it, they began to pry open the Russian-French agreement.

It seemed a simple matter to the Soviet rulers for their agents to become dominant in republican Spain. The Communist Parties were going to "capture" the popular enthusiasm for the defence of democratic Spain that blazed forth in Europe and America. With the Soviet Union as the only country selling arms to the Republicans, it was easy for its Spanish representative, the C.P.S., to become dominant in Spain. Over the tables of international

diplomacy, the Soviet Union was going to speak for Spain. Now would the British listen to reason?

Indeed, it was easy for the smoothly working Communist organizations to gain control of the material aid and the enlistment of volunteers by which the desire to help Spain showed itself in Europe and America. In time, all aid and all volunteering went through Communist controlled agencies. They "captured" them. To the Spanish people it appeared that the Communist Party was their only bridge to the peoples of Western Europe. It is true that outside of Spain it soon became recognizable that the show had been stolen by the Communists, that it was a partisan affair. People started to wonder and murmur. That did not matter. What mattered was to have the Communists win political domination in Spain.

This great cause was aided even more by the fact that Russia was the only power to sell arms to the Republicans. The sale was made with definite conditions. The policies decided on for their Spanish wards by the Moscow wise men had to rule in Loyalist territory. Arms were not given to military units that assumed to represent political viewpoints frowned on by Moscow. Since the possession of up-to-date firearms and support by artillery and planes made, in this modern war, the difference of life and death for the individual soldier, it soon became known that it was more healthful for good republicans to belong to Communist controlled units. Only foolish political idealists remained in the step-child units in which the number of pieces of modern firearms was small and which were not regularly supported by artillery and planes. The Aragon front, broken recently by Franco, was one of these unsafe sectors.

(Leon Trotsky, the old War Commissar realized that was bad, and he found a way out. Addressing himself especially to Spanish Anarchists—whose position he does not understand as well, say, as his pal Antonov-Ovseenko did—he writes in the March issue of *Quatrième Internationale*, the organ of his organization: "If the Anarchist leaders had been even a bit revolutionary, they would have answered the first blackmailing by Moscow not only by continuing the socialist offensive but also by divulging to the working class of the world the counter-revolutionary conditions imposed by Stalin. That way, they would have forced the Moscow bureaucracy to choose openly between the socialist revolution and the Franco dictatorship. The Thermidorian bureaucracy fears revolution and hates it. But it is afraid also to be strangled in the Fascist ring. Moreover, it depends on the workers. Everything permits one to believe that Moscow would be forced to furnish arms, and perhaps even at lower prices."

(There you are. The matter needed some publicity. Word should have been gotten by the Spanish Anarchists to the Soviet workers and they would have fixed Stalin. It is a pity the Russian section of the Fourth International did not assume this mission.

(But, continues Trotsky his "dialectics," what would have happened if Moscow had refused to give arms without conditions to anti-Moscow Spanish revolutionists? Well, look, he says, look what happened in Russia. There were no foreign protectors giving arms to the revolutionists in Russia. In fact, says Trotsky, with a "revolutionary party" at the head of the Spanish workers, the problem of armament would have had no importance. Then as a result of sheer "revolutionary contagion," Franco's army, including the Moors and the Italians, would have been won over in a short time and the soldiers of fascism thus reduced to an insignificant quantity. What was lacking was a revolutionary vanguard party.

(One asks: "Where was the Spanish section of the 'Fourth



International'? Are not they the revolutionary vanguard? Why did they not take charge of the task of 'revolutionary contagion'—after having gotten the Soviet, British and French workers to force Stalin, Blum and Chamberlain to give arms to the hosts of the revolution without any conditions whatsoever?

(That, my friends, is what passes in certain tea houses in New York and Paris under the name of "Revolutionary Marxism." How Marx would have giggled!)<sup>1</sup>

Another thing that the Soviet arbiters of the fate of Republican Spain had a strong aversion to was the idea of guerrilla warfare.

It is true that a modern war can be won only with a modern organized army. Because of their paucity of arms the Loyalists' strategy was to hold on, to play the tactics of defence, against the smaller, plunging Rebel forces. Guerrilla bands would have performed behind the Rebel lines in Spain the job that is being done by them against the Japanese in China. They destroy bases of supplies, interfere with communications, raise the population against the invader, making advance by the enemy precarious. Guerrillas do not need costly arms of big caliber, of which the Loyalist forces were short. The existence of guerrilla bands does not interfere with the organization of a disciplined modern army. In fact, guerrillas make guerrillas. Punitive expeditions raise the population against the expeditionary forces. The enemy is made insecure in his own territory.

The first response of the Spanish workers and peasants to the militarist rebellion was guerrilla warfare, to which the Spaniards lend themselves by tradition.

The Soviet advisers decided that guerrilla activity was not safe for the cause of Russian hegemony in Spain. They were correct. Guerrilla warfare would have given a chance to all kinds of independent political currents to become an armed power in the country and possibly offered a serious challenge to the claim of political hegemony made by the Spanish representatives of the Soviet Union. Guerrilla warfare was not safe. The Soviet agents were going to be busy enough suppressing dissidents in the streets of Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona. Guerrilla warfare would give the dangerous elements free rein to carry on their dangerous experiments. It would give them a chance to win a wide following in the country.

The Russian agents got the upper hand in Loyalist Spain. It was a *morte main*, a death clutch. The kidnappings, jailings, secret murders did not tend to bring harmony to the anti-Fascist front and did not make the individual Spanish anti-Fascist more enthusiastic than before. It is true that "dangerous" experiments at cooperative farming and food distribution by workers' organizations were suppressed, the management of factories was handed over from the trade unions to the State, with a promise of future return of possession to the rightful owners, soldiers were made to salute their superiors and shine buttons, the old popular names of the battalions and divisions were changed for numbers. The unified army was completely under a mixed command of trusted Soviet representatives and the old professionals. All International Brigaders were made to understand they were under C.P. orders. Most Republican sympathizers in Europe and America were made to believe that only the C.P. and the Soviet Union were "saving Spain from fascism," though the Soviet aid, paid for exorbitantly with Spanish gold, was never formidable enough to do more than delay defeat.

But the fate of Democratic Spain was actually in the hands

of the reigning politicians of Europe. The Soviet salesmen dangled Spain under the Britishers' noses. The latter refused to buy something they could get at a better price and without risks.

The first consequence of Hitler's coup in Austria was to make Mussolini feel he needed support in the West and made Chamberlain believe that this time Mussolini's price for being good would be smaller. The Japanese threat to British domination in the Far East called for British peace in Europe. A Rome-London pact was going to put a damper on the tinder box in Spain. There was nothing to fear now from an early victory by Franco and his generals.

Yet even at this moment, it is wrong to say that Franco's victory is assured. A number of things can happen in Europe. Furthermore, the part of Loyalist Spain that depends on the city of Madrid and is dominated by the C.P.S. disposes of enough Soviet material to hold out for some time. The tendency will be for Miaja and the C.P. to leave Barcelona to its fate and go their own way in the Madrid-Cartagena area. Even Barcelona may be able to strike back. What will avail Britain and France in the impending realignment of powers? That is the question.

## TROTSKY WARNS • E.M.

VICTOR SERGE in No. 257, 1937, *Révolution Proletarienne* says: "The *Lutte Ouvrière* (Trotskyite organ) writes: 'The only question that is *useful* to answer is the following: Was the triumphant revolution, undermined by the social and economic contradictions of the civil war right in crushing movements whose unfolding signified the opening of parties to capitalist democracy . . . ?'

"That is evidently not the only question, since the entire history of Bolshevism and the Soviets must be taken into consideration here. And it is exactly the opposite of what revolutionaries have always asked themselves, with legitimate uneasiness, about Kronstadt. Was the dictatorship of the proletariat, as exercised by the Communist Party, right in suppressing by force the protests, demands, proposals and demonstrations of famine-stricken workers? We must remember that before Kronstadt there was Astrakhan. Was it right in suppressing movements which, under its rule, only came out of worker democracy? . . . There is a lesson to be drawn here, a lesson teaching us the need of returning honestly to the conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat (against the dispossessed possessors) as a wide and genuine democracy of workers.

"The *Lutte Ouvrière* 'seizes moreover the opportunity to destroy the legend according to which Kronstadt in 1921 was an immense massacre. The truth is quite different . . . !' Quite different, comrades?

"Well, tell then what is the truth. Give details, indicate your sources . . . A massacre does not need to be immense to be abominable, and, by definition, anti-socialist. By hundreds, if not by thousands, the Kronstadt sailors were shot down on the spot. Three months later, they were still being taken out of the prisons of Petrograd, in little groups, to be executed in the prison cellars and in the prison yards. Three months later, when the Nep that they had demanded was already proclaimed by the government, when their death—secret death—no longer could serve the purpose of intimidation! And those were not Whites . . .

"Everything in this somber page already announces the future which we see today. The *L.O.* recalls that the Xth Congress

<sup>1</sup> The forthcoming issue of the International Review will contain a study of *Radical Theories and Theorists in the Spanish War*, dealing with the ideas and actual roles of the Anarchists, P.O.U.M., and its foreign sympathizers, Caballero, Araquistain and the Spanish section of the Fourth International.



of the Party, inspired by Lenin, sent a great number of its delegates to attack Kronstadt. But the *L.O.* does not tell everything on the subject. The Xth Congress had just solemnly condemned the Workers' Opposition, which denounced the encroachment of the bureaucracy and demanded more democracy for the workers . . .

"Two of the authors of the platform of the Workers' Opposition, old fighters of the revolution for a quarter of a century, have been in prison for years. They possibly still survive in some jail . . ."

Whereupon Trotsky himself, fulminating from his fastness in Coyoacan, warns:

"The discussions of today concerning Kronstadt are traversed by the same axis of demarcation of classes as the Kronstadt uprising itself, when the reactionary party of sailors tried to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat. Feeling their impotence in the revolutionary political arena of today, the confusionists and petty-bourgeois eclectics try to utilize the old Kronstadt episode to struggle against the Fourth International, that is to say, the international party of the proletarian revolution. (Pish-posh!—*Ed.*) These new malcontents of Kronstadt *will be crushed* as were the others, certainly without the use of arms, for happily they hold no fortress." *Quatrieme Internationale*, organ of the French Trotskyites, March 1938.)

From H. W.'s obituary note on the passing of Ramsay MacDonald (*Socialist Standard*, December 1937):

"His utterances were like papal encyclicals; they suggested, almost the divine word from the sacred presence, an authority that should silence criticism, a withering, pitying disdain for unbelievers. Yet how superficial it all was! Underneath that appearance of brilliance there was no grip, no real understanding of the events of which he was the central figure."

The next issue of the International Review will contain a new study of the question of the Kronstadt sailors, Workers' Opposition, Trotsky's present love of decency, justice and fair play, and Trotsky's past record as a horny-handed proletarian (!) revolutionist. The article will consider his recent gentle answers to the various "petty-bourgeois, liberals, weak-hearted parliamentarians, eclectics and intellectuals" who dared to raise the point after he, so unfortunately, fell prey to his love of publicity and published a reply to Wendelin Thomas' private letter without including the letter he said he was answering.

### Read

**TROTSKY BEATS HIS CHEST OVER KRONSTADT**  
in the next issue of the  
**INTERNATIONAL REVIEW**

## SOCIALISM AND DICTATORSHIP • Martov

*This article was written in 1918. It appeared in the Moscow WORKERS INTERNATIONAL, edited by Martov. While he was part and parcel of the Russian labor movement, Martov approaches in this essay the outlook of the mature socialist movement that is only now rising within capitalist society.*

**I**N HER POLEMIC against Edouard Bernstein, Rosa Luxemburg declared, quite correctly that "there never was any doubt for Marx and Engels about the necessity of having the proletariat conquer political power."<sup>1</sup> However, the conditions under which this conquest was to be accomplished did not

appear the same to Marx and Engels at different periods of their life.

"At the beginning of their activity," writes Kautsky in his *Democracy or Dictatorship*, "Marx and Engels were greatly influenced by Blanquism, though they immediately adopted to it a critical attitude. The dictatorship of the proletariat to which they aspired in their first writings still showed some Blanquist features."

This remark is not entirely accurate. If it is true that Marx—putting aside the petty-bourgeois revolutionism that colored the ideology and politics of Blanquism—recognized the Blanquists of 1848 to be a party representing the revolutionary French proletariat, it is no less true that there is nothing in their works to show that Marx and Engels found themselves at that time under the influence of Blanqui and his partisans. Kautsky is right when he points out that Marx and Engels always took toward the Blanquists a wholly critical attitude. It is undeniable that their first conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat arose under the influence of the *Jacobin* tradition of 1793, with which the Blanquists themselves were penetrated. The powerful historic example of the political dictatorship exercised during the Terror by the lower classes of the population of Paris served Marx and Engels as a point of departure in their reflections on the future conquest of political power by the proletariat. In 1895 (in his preface to *Civil War in France*), Engels drew the balance of the experience that his friend and he had gathered in the revolutions of 1848 and 1871: "The time has passed for revolutions accomplished through the sudden seizure of power by small conscious minorities *at the head of unconscious masses*." When he said this, Engels recognized that in the first period of their activity, the question for him and Marx was exactly that of the conquest of political power "by a conscious minority at the head of unconscious masses." In other words, the problem that seemed to face them was the duplication, in the 19th century, of the experience of the Jacobin dictatorship, with the role of the Jacobins and the Cordeliers taken by the conscious revolutionary elements of the proletariat, supporting themselves on the confused social fermentation of the general population.

By adroit politics—which, because of its knowledge of the practice and theory of scientific socialism—the vanguard would be able to carry on after its seizure of power, the broad proletarian masses would be introduced to the problems current on the day after the revolution and would thus be raised to the rank of conscious authors of historic action. Only such a conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat could permit Marx and Engels to expect that after a more or less prolonged lull, the revolution of 1848—which was begun by the last grapple between feudal society and the bourgeoisie and by the same internal conflicts occurring between the different layers of the bourgeois society—would end in the historic victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

In 1895 Engels recognized the inconsistency of this conception. "As soon as the situation calls for the total transformation of the social order, the masses must participate in it directly, and they must have an understanding of what is at stake and what must be won. This is what the history of the last half-century has taught us."

That does not mean to say, however, that in 1848 Marx and Engels did not entirely realize what were the necessary historic premises of the socialist revolution. Not only did they recognize that the socialist transformation could only arrive at a very high level of capitalism, but they also denied the possibility of keeping

<sup>1</sup> *Reform or Revolution*, page 46. English ed.



political power in the hands of the proletariat in the case that this imperative condition did not first exist.

In 1846, in his letter to M. Hess, W. Weitling relates his break with Marx in the following words: "We arrived at the conclusion that there can be no question now of realizing communism in Germany; that first the bourgeoisie must come to power." The "we" refers to Marx and Engels, for Weitling says further on: "On this question Marx and Engels had a very violent discussion with me." In October-November of 1847, Marx wrote on this subject with clear-cut definiteness in his article: "Moralizing criticism."

"If it is true that politically, that is to say with the help of the State, the bourgeoisie 'maintains the injustice of property relations' (Heinzer's expression), it is no less true that it does not create them. The injustice of the property relations . . . does not owe its origin in any way to the political domination of the bourgeois classes; but on the contrary, the domination of the bourgeoisie flows from the existing relations of production . . . For this reason, if the proletariat overthrows the political domination of the bourgeoisie, *its victory will only be a point in the process of the bourgeois revolution itself* and will serve the cause of the latter by aiding its further development. This happened in 1794, and will happen again as long as the march, the 'movement,' of history will not have elaborated the material factors that will create the *necessity* of putting an end to the bourgeois methods of production—and, by the way of consequence, to the political domination of the bourgeoisie." (*Literary Heritage*, volume II, p. 512-513. Emphasis by Martov.)

It appears therefore that Marx admitted the possibility of a political victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie at a point of historic development when the previously necessary conditions for a socialist revolution were not yet mature. But he stressed that such a victory would be transitory, and he predicted with the prescience of genius that a conquest of political power by the proletariat which is premature from the historic viewpoint would "only be a point in the process of the bourgeois revolution itself."

We conclude that, in the case of a notably "premature" conquest of power, Marx would consider it obligatory of the conscious elements of the proletariat to pursue a policy that takes into consideration the fact that such a conquest represents objectively "only a point in the process of the bourgeois revolution itself" and will "serve the latter by aiding its further development." He would expect a policy that would lead the proletariat to limit voluntarily the position and the solution of the revolutionary problems. For the proletariat can score a victory over the bourgeoisie—and not for the bourgeoisie—only when "the march of history will have elaborated the material factors that create the *necessity* (not merely the objective *possibility*!—Martov) of putting an end to the bourgeois methods of production."

The following words of Marx explain in what sense a passing victory of the proletariat can become a point in the process of the bourgeois revolution:

"By its bludgeon blows the Reign of Terror cleansed the surface of France, as if by a miracle, of all the feudal ruins. With its timorous caution, the bourgeoisie would not have managed this task in several decades. Therefore, the bloody acts of the people merely served to level the route of the bourgeoisie."

The Reign of Terror in France was the momentary domination of the democratic petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat over all the possessing classes, including the authentic bourgeoisie. Marx indicates very definitely that such a momentary domination cannot be the starting point of a socialist transformation, unless

the material factors rendering this transformation indispensable will have first been worked out.

One might say that Marx wrote this specially for the benefit of those people who consider the simple fact of a fortuitous conquest of power by the democratic small bourgeoisie and the proletariat as proof of the maturity of society for the socialist revolution. But it may also be said that he wrote this specially for the benefit of those socialists who believe that never in the course of a revolution that is bourgeois in its objectives can there occur a possibility permitting the political power to escape from the hands of the bourgeoisie and pass to the democratic masses. One may say that Marx wrote this also for the benefit of those socialists who consider utopian the mere idea of such a displacement of power and who do not realize that this phenomenon is "only a point in the process of the bourgeois revolution itself," that it is a factor assuring, under certain conditions, the most complete and radical suppression of the obstacles rising in the way of this bourgeois revolution.

The European revolution of 1848 did not lead to the conquest of political power by the proletariat. Soon after the June days, Marx and Engels started to realize that the historic conditions for such a conquest were not yet ripe. However, they continued to over-estimate the pace of historic development and expected, as we know, a new revolutionary assault shortly after, even before the last wave of the tempest of 1848 had died away. They found new factors favoring the possibility of power passing, into the hands of the proletariat, not only in the experience gathered by the latter in the class combats during the "mad year" but also in the evolution undergone by the small bourgeoisie, which seemed to push it irresistibly into a solid union with the proletariat.

In his *Class Struggles in France* and later in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx noted the movement of the small democratic bourgeoisie of the cities toward the proletariat, a movement that took definite form by 1848. And in the second of the indicated works, he announced the probability of similar movement on the part of the small peasants, deceived by the dictatorship of Napoleon III, whose principal creators and strongest support they were.

"The interests of the peasants," he wrote, "are no longer confused with those of the bourgeoisie and capital, as was the case under Napoleon I. On the contrary, they are antagonistic. That is why the peasants now find a natural ally and guide in the city proletariat, whose destiny it is to overthrow the bourgeois order." (*The Eighteenth Brumaire*, from the German edition, p. 102.)

Thus the proletariat no longer had to wait to become the absolute majority in order to win political power. Having grown large as a result of the development of capitalism, it benefitted besides by the support of the small propertyholders of the city and country whom the pinched chances of getting on moved away from the capitalist bourgeoisie.

When, after an interruption of twenty years, the revolutionary process was revived to end in the Paris Commune, it was in this new fact that Marx thought he saw an opportunity favoring the solution of the last uprising by the effective and solid dictatorship of the proletariat.

Marx wrote in *Civil War*:

"Here was the first revolution in which the working class was acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative, even by the great bulk of the Paris middle-class—shopkeepers, tradesmen, merchants—the wealthy capitalists alone excepted . . . This mass, belonging to the Third-Estate, had assisted in 1848, in crushing the workers' insurrection, and soon after, without the least ceremony, was sacrificed to their creditors by the then Con-



stituent Assembly . . . This mass now felt it was necessary for it to choose between the Commune and the Empire . . . After the errant band of Bonapartist courtiers and capitalists had fled Paris, the true Third-Estate Party of Order, taking the shape of the "Republican Union," took its place under the flag of the Commune and defended the latter against Thiers' calumnies. (*Civil War in France*, Russian edition, *Boureviestnik*, pp. 36-37.)

Already in 1845, at the time when he was only finding his way to socialism, Marx indicated in his *Introduction to the Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Law* the necessary conditions permitting a revolutionary class to lay claim to a position of dominance in society. For that, it must be recognized by all the masses oppressed under the existing regime as "the liberating class par excellence." This situation is possible when the class against which the struggle is led becomes in the eyes of the masses in question "the oppressing class par excellence." In 1848 this situation certainly did not exist. The decomposition of small property was not yet far enough advanced.

The situation appeared quite different in 1871. By that time, Marx and Engels had undoubtedly freed themselves from the influence of the Jacobin tradition and, therefore, from their conception of the dictatorship of a "conscious minority" acting at the head of unconscious (not understanding) masses (that is, masses which are simply in revolt, J.M.). It is precisely on the fact that the ruined small property-holders grouped themselves knowingly around the socialist proletariat that the two great theoreticians of scientific socialism based their forecast of the outcome of the Parisian insurrection, which, as we know, began contrary to their wishes. They were correct concerning the city petty-bourgeoisie (at least, that of Paris). Contrary to what happened after the June days, the massacre of the Communards in the month of May, 1871 was not the work of the entire bourgeois society but only of the capitalist class. The small bourgeoisie participated neither in putting down the Commune nor in the reactionary orgy that followed. Marx and Engels were however, much less correct concerning the peasants. In *Civil War*, Marx expressed the opinion that only the isolation of Paris and the short life of the Commune had kept the peasants from joining with the proletarian revolution. Pursuing the thread of reasoning of which *Eighteenth Brumaire* is the beginning, he said:

"The peasant was a Bonapartist, because the great Revolution, with all its benefits to him, was in his eyes, personified in Napoleon. Under the Second Empire this delusion had almost entirely disappeared. This prejudice of the past could not withstand the appeal of the Commune which called to the living interests, the urgent wants of the peasantry. The worthy Rurals knew full well that if the Paris of the Commune could communicate freely with the departments (provinces), there would be a general rising of the peasants within three months . . . (Page 38.)

The history of the Third Republic has demonstrated that Marx was mistaken on this point. In the 70's, the peasants (as, moreover, a large part of the urban petty bourgeoisie in the provinces) were still far from a break with capital and the bourgeoisie. They were still far from recognizing the latter as the "oppressing class," far from considering the proletariat as "the liberating class" and confiding to it the "direction of their movement." In 1895 in his preface to *Class Struggles*, Engels had to state: It was shown again, twenty years after the events of 1848-1851, that the power of the working class was not possible, because "France had not supported Paris." (Engels also gave as a cause of the defeat, the absence of unity in the very ranks of the revolting proletariat, which, in proof of its insufficient revolutionary maturity, led it to

waste its strength in a "sterile struggle between the Blanquists and Proudhonians."

But no matter what was the error in Marx's evaluation, he succeeded in outlining very clearly the problems of the dictatorship of the proletariat. "The Commune," he said, "was the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore the truly national government." (*Civil War*, page 38, emphasis by Martov.)

According to Marx, the dictatorship of the proletariat does not consist in crushing by the proletariat of all non-proletarian classes in society. On the contrary, it is, according to Marx, the welding around the proletariat of all the "healthy elements" of society—all except the "rich capitalists," all except the class against which the historic struggle of the proletariat is directed. Both in its composition and in its tendencies, the government of the Commune was a working men's government. But this government was an expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat not because it was imposed by violence on a non-proletarian majority. It did not come into being that way. On the contrary, the government of the Commune was a proletarian dictatorship because those workers and those "acknowledged representatives of the working class" had received the power from the majority itself. Marx stressed the fact that "the Commune was formed of municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in various wards of the city . . ." By suppressing those organs of the old governmental power which merely served to oppress the people, the Commune divested of its legal functions an authority that claims to be above society itself, and put those functions in the hands of the responsible servants of the people . . . The people organized in Communes (outside of Paris) was called on to use universal suffrage just as any employer uses his individual right to choose workers, managers, accountants in his business.

The completely democratic constitution of the Paris Commune, based on universal suffrage, on the immediate recall of every officeholder by the simple decision of his electors, on the suppression of bureaucracy and the armed force as opposed to the people, on the electiveness of all offices—that is what constitutes, according to Marx, the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He never thinks of opposing such a dictatorship to democracy. Already in 1847, in his first draft of the Communist Manifesto, Engels wrote: "It (the proletarian revolution) will establish first of all the democratic administration of the State and will thus install, directly or indirectly, the political domination of the proletariat. Directly—in England, where the proletariat forms the majority of the population. Indirectly—in France and in Germany, where the majority of the population is not composed only of proletarians but also of small peasants and small bourgeois, who are only now beginning to pass into the proletariat and whose political interests fall more and more under the influence of the proletariat." (*The Principles of Communism*, Russian translation under the editorship of Zinoviev, p. 22.) "The first step in the revolution," by the working class declares the Manifesto, "is to raise the proletariat to the position of a ruling class, to win the battle of democracy."

Between the elevation of the proletariat to the position of a ruling class and the conquest of democracy, Marx and Engels put an equals sign. They understood the application of this political power by the proletariat only in the forms of a total democracy.

In the measure that Marx and Engels became convinced that the socialist revolution could only be accomplished with the support of the majority of the population accepting knowingly the positive program of socialism—so their conception of a class dictatorship



lost its Jacobin content. But what is the positive substance of the nation of the dictatorship once it has been modified in this manner? Exactly what is formulated with great precision in the program of our Party (Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party), a program drafted at a time when the theoretic discussion provoked by "Bernsteinism" led Marxists to polish and determine with care certain expressions which had obviously lost their exact meaning with long usage in the daily political struggle.

The program of the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia was the only official program of a Labor Party that defined the idea of the conquest of political power by the proletariat in the terms of a "class dictatorship." Since Bernstein, Jaures and other critics of Marxism insisted on giving the expression: "dictatorship of the proletariat" the Blanquist definition of power held by an organized minority and resting on violence exercised by this minority over the majority, the authors of the Russian program were obliged to fix as narrowly as possible the limits of this political idea. They did that by declaring that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the power used by the proletariat to crush all resistance which the exploiting class might oppose to the realization of the socialist and revolutionary transformation. Simply that.

An effective force concentrated in the State, which can thus realize the *conscious will of the majority* despite the resistance of an economically powerful minority—that is the dictatorship of the proletariat. It can be nothing else than that in light of the teachings of Marx. Not only must such a dictatorship adapt itself to a democratic regime, but it can only exist in the framework of democracy, that is, under conditions where there is full exercise of absolute political equality on the part of all citizens. Such a dictatorship can only be conceived in a situation where the proletariat has effectively united about itself "all the healthy elements" of the nation, that is, all those who cannot but profit by the revolutionary transformation inscribed in the program of the proletariat. It can only be established when, the historic development will have brought all the healthy elements to recognize the advantage to them of this transformation. The government embodying such a dictatorship will be, in the full sense of the term, a "national government."

## HISTORIC ROOTS OF BOLSHEVISM

• Sprenger

### *The Early Political Line*

THE FIRST bourgeois revolutionary movement in Russia was that of the Decembrists, whose radical wing was exterminated by the Romanovs. The Decembrists wanted to win a democratic constitution for Russia. This was also the goal of the revolutionary trends that appeared in the following decades, as for example the students' circle to which Cherneshevsky belonged. "To Young Russia," the manifesto issued by Cherneshevsky's group, called for a "bloody and pitiless revolution" to do away with "all the bases of contemporary society and all the supporters of the existing social order." It contained a number of democratic demands and culminated with the expression of its belief in the "social and democratic republic." While Bakunin's revolutionary program stood for the destruction of Tsarism and the suppression of all "exploiters": the landed nobility and the merchant and industrial capitalist classes—the Narodniki terrorists set for themselves a more definitely bourgeois task. After the fall of Tsarism, they were going to convoke a constituent assembly. The 1880 program of Narodnaya Volya included de-

mands for a representative assembly, provincial and municipal autonomy, freedom of religion, speech, press and assembly, universal franchise, a territorial militia, the nationalization of the soil, and sanctions providing for the transfer of the ownership of factories to workers. All of this was going to be applied by the provisional revolutionary government that would arise upon the fall of the autocracy. This provisional revolutionary government was going to assure the completion of the countrywide transformation and guarantee the democratic elections to the constituent assembly. In other words, the program of the Narodniki already contained much of the Jacobin idea of a transitional dictatorship.

The aim of the Russian Revolution has been discussed and recognized for some time before the appearance of a social-democratic movement in Russia. The Social Democracy had merely taken it over and called it its own. The Social Democratic program of 1903 recognized as the first task of the party's revolutionary activity: "the defeat of Tsarism and the establishment of a democratic republic." One year before, Lenin took the trouble to explain that the Russian Social Democrats could not throw overboard the whole of populism but "had to lay hold of its revolutionary, general-democratic principles and recognize them as their own." (*Collected Works*, Vol. V, page 156.)

The Bolsheviks continued the line of the preceding bourgeois-revolutionary movement not only organizationally but also politically. While Zinoviev designated the Decembrists as "revolutionists who were without question bourgeois," he added emphatically: "Our generation does not spurn even this heritage," and went on to say that—

"We (the Bolsheviks) are the sole and true continuators of all that was excellent in the movement of the revolutionary intellectuals of the 80's, 70's, 60's and even before then." (*On the Development of Our Party*, page 3.)

Also Pokrovsky found it important to stress the traditional tieup between the old revolutionary movement and the Bolsheviks. He thus designates Spechnev, an outstanding member of a revolutionary circle in the 40's, as a Communist—because Spechnev "propagated the idea of the armed insurrection." Tkachev is for him "the first Russian Marxist," because the latter stood at the head of a movement "which called for the formation of a strong conspiratorial organization for the purpose of seizing power, though by means of old, petty-bourgeois, Blanquist forms." And the first terrorist attentat by the Narodniki is recognized by Pokrovsky as "the first social revolutionary heroic act, the first gesture of the Russian revolution"—just as the proclamation "To Young Russia" is "the first monument of our revolutionary socialism." The Narodnik terrorist was for Lenin's disciples a sort of Bolshevik who resorted to terror because he could not as yet find support in the labor movement. Writing about the great leader of the terrorists, Zinoviev observed: "If he had bound himself to the working class and taken up the question of the social revolution, Sheliabov could have been considered a real Bolshevik and Communist."

The Russian Social Democracy was going to carry forward the

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movement that was begun by the old revolutionary intelligentsia.

The Narodniki posed the task. The Social Democracy made this task its own. The principal content of the activity of the Bolsheviks up to 1917 was the deepening and concretization of this task.

### *The Tradition of National Revolutionarism*

The aim of every bourgeois revolution is the creation of a modern national State, in the framework of which may be realized the rule of the bourgeoisie. This was first accomplished with the aid of the radical democratic movement. Everywhere the period of preparation for the bourgeois revolution, the ideas of nation and nationalism became a part of the revolutionary ideology.

The old Russian revolutionists were also nationalists. They considered their socialism to be a particular Russian socialism, which would emerge from the Mir. The struggle against autocracy was for the Narodniki not only a struggle for the liberation of the people but also a struggle for the liberation of "Mother Russia." Herzen denied that Tsarism was a Russian phenomenon. He said it was "Prussian-Tartar"—a foreign body within the desecrated Russian nation.

In contrast to the national Socialism of the Narodniki, the Russian Social Democracy began its activity with the avowal of internationalism. The truth of the matter, however, is that the element of revolutionary nationalism now expressed in Stalinism already existed in the old Bolshevism. In the midst of the struggle against the social chauvinism of the Western Social Democracy, Lenin wrote under the title *The National Pride of the Great Russians*:

"Is then the sentiment of national pride alien to us Great Russian class-conscious proletarians? Of course not. We love our language and our fatherland, and strive to raise its toiling masses to a conscious democratic and socialistic life. We suffer to see and feel our beautiful native land subjected to acts of violence and oppression, to a grievous yoke, by the Tsarist officials, by the landowners and the capitalists. We are proud to witness that these acts of violence have evoked opposition in our midst, in the camp of the Great Russians. We are proud that out of this camp have come forward Radischev, the Decembrists, the Rasnoschintsy revolutionists of the 70's. We are proud that in the year 1905 the Great Russian working class created a powerful revolutionary mass party and that the Great Russian muzhik is becoming democratic and is beginning to chase out the priests and the landowners." (*Collected Works*, vol. XVIII, page 104.)

And Lenin continues with the utmost of patriotic self-esteem: "We, the Great Russian workers, full of the sentiment of national pride, desire, at any price, a free, independent, self-reliant, democratic, republican, proud Great Russia . . ." (*Collected Works*, vol. XVIII, page 105.)

Lenin puts this national pride side by side with socialism, expressing very clearly the outlook of the socialism of the Narodniki: "The interests of the (not slavishly constituted) national pride of the Great Russians fits in with the socialist interests of the Great Russian (and all other) proletarians." (Volume XVIII, page 107.)

These remarks bring to the surface the emotional current that offered motive power to the Bolshevik intelligentsia. The task they recognized as theirs was that of freeing the nation from the yoke of autocracy. In other words, they continued, with the aid of superior social discernment and more effective political methods, the work that was begun by the Narodniki, who were hampered in their time by their peculiar illusions and inadequate political methods. Together with this bourgeois-revolutionary task, Bolshevism took over certain elements of the national-revolutionary

ideology of the populists. This ideology was quiescent during certain periods of the struggle, but came to the fore when the Bolsheviks had won political power. In Stalin's phrase: "Socialism in One Country," we have Lenin's "national pride of the Great Russians" and the final realization of the Narodnik concept of a special kind of Russian "socialism."

### *Bolshevism and Jacobinism*

Lenin not only recognized the connection between the Bolsheviks and the earlier revolutionary movements of his country. He also sought to tie up the position of his party with the general tradition of classic bourgeois revolutionarism. When the Mensheviks, after the 1903 congress of the Russian Social Democracy, reproached him with resorting to Jacobin methods, he immediately picked up the epithet and declared:

"The Jacobin, inseparably bound to the proletarian organization of the proletariat, aware of its class interests, that precisely is the revolutionary Social Democrat." (*Collected Works*, vol. VI, page 402.)

Lenin branded the Mensheviks as the "Gironde," the "vacillating, petty-bourgeois wing" of the Russian Revolution. This comparison was borrowed from Plekhanov, who attacking "reformism" and "economism" in the *Iskra* of 1900, wrote:

"Two different trends are already apparent in the general socialist movement, and the revolutionary struggle of the 20th century is possibly moving toward a split, which can be described as the separation of the Social-Democratic 'Mountain' from the Social-Democratic 'Gironde'." (*Works*, Vol. XII, page 65, Russian ed.)

In 1905 Lenin called Engels a "true Jacobin of the Social Democracy." He reverted again and again to this comparison with Jacobinism. The term was later applied by Lenin's disciples to Lenin himself. Thus Zinoviev called Lenin a "Marat, joined to the urban and agrarian proletariat."

Bolshevism has been likened to Blanquism. But Engels has well explained what ought to be understood as Blanquism:

"That a relatively small number of resolute, well-organized men would be able, at a given favorable moment, not only to seize the helm of the State, but also to keep power, by energetic and unrelenting action, until they had succeeded in drawing the mass of the people into the revolution by marshalling them around the small band of leaders." (Introduction to *Civil War in France*.)

Judged in this sense, the Bolsheviks were not Blanquists. They, as a well organized minority, did not plan to seize power by means of a putschist attack, say, as the Narodniki hoped to arrive at power by means of their terrorist attentats. The Bolsheviks aimed rather to organize and lead the revolutionary mass process. Historically, the role of the Bolsheviks is most like that of the Jacobins. Both movements expected to attain their dictatorial power in the course of the process, solving the tasks of a radical bourgeois revolution. But Bolshevism is also akin to Jacobinism because of the similar organizational methods and techniques of procedure used by the two chronologically separate movements. Both represented "leader" (vanguard) organizations of professional revolutionaries, themselves directed "from top to bottom." Both movements stressed the belief in the omnipotence of their organizations in determining, with an iron hand, the course of the revolutionary process. Both pursued their aims with inflexible determination and sought to attain their goal by all means at hand. And finally, the two movements found themselves in a similar relation to the bourgeoisie of their countries. ". . . The Jacobins made the bourgeois revolution without the bourgeoisie." (Trotsky, *The Nature of the Russian Revolution*, page 43.) And so the Bolsheviks.



In all these ways Bolshevism was *true Jacobinism*. The social content of the Russian Revolution differed from the French Revolution of 1789-93 in the same manner that the Russian lorded over by Tsarist absolutism, with its developed industrial capitalism, differed from the absolutist society of 18th century France, characterized by the then beginning capitalist production. But the general line of relation between Bolshevism and Jacobinism is that of the bourgeois revolution, which destroyed absolutism and could be advanced only by the most radical means at hand. Avowing Jacobinism, Lenin extended the Bolshevik tradition to the French Revolution and thus provided the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia with an international "class-conscious" tradition.

#### Summary

The Russian Social Democracy sprang from the intelligentsia embodying the bourgeois-revolutionary movement of Russia. It took an important step forward when it discovered the possibility of a mass basis for its politics in the Russian proletariat. The Russian Social Democracy then took toward the Russian workers the same role that the Narodnik general staff before had assumed toward the peasants. Inheriting the Narodnik tradition, the Bolsheviks, as a fraction of the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia, took over the political tasks of the bourgeois revolution in their country. This national tradition and these national tasks are given recognition by their leader Lenin in his acknowledgement of the "interests of the national pride of the Great Russians." The Bolsheviks also sought to attach themselves to the international tradition of the revolutionary intelligentsia. They designated themselves as the Jacobins of the Social Democracy and resorted to the political methods typical of Jacobinism.

From the beginning, the Bolsheviks considered themselves to be the shock troops of the Russian Revolution. Bolshevism adapted itself to the special conditions of the Russian Revolution and created a great revolutionary ideology and tradition, which helped the Party to face its historic tasks.

(In the following essays, Sprenger deals with these topics: "The Bolshevik Party and the Proletariat," "The Worker in the Bolshevik Party," "The Organization of the Revolutionists," "Lenin's Theory of Class-consciousness," "The Role of the Proletariat in the Bolshevik 'Tactic.'" This is the first publication of Sprenger's work on the *Historic Role of Bolshevism*.)

## CHANGING CAPITALISM

• Jonathan Ayres

WE HAVE described the productive relation existing between the worker and his immediate employer and the relation existing between the immediate masters of production and the commercial and banking entrepreneurs. We have noticed that use-values can only be created by the labor of the productive worker, and that such use-values find their market equivalents in the process of exchange typical of capitalism. Applying his labor to the material means of production, the worker produces a greater value than is represented on the market by his wages. This surplus-value is taken for themselves and their guests by the immediate master of production and his several economic partners.

The capitalist economist, who is more interested in justifying than in explaining this scheme of things, sets up five categories, which he sometimes endows with the personality of social classes and sometimes limits to the impersonal status of "factors of pro-

duction." "Capital, labor, the entrepreneur, land and the State have united to produce goods. Each of these factors receives a share of the product: interest going to capital, wages to labor, profit to the entrepreneur, rent to land and taxes to the State."

Capitalist economy has undergone important changes of form since the first signs of large-scale industry. Sneaking in as a modest helper of accumulation, the credit system has drawn "by invisible threads the money resources scattered all over the surface of society into the hands of individual or associated capitalists." It became "a new and formidable weapon in the competitive struggle" of capitalism and finally transformed "itself into an immense social mechanism for the centralization of capital." Today Ford is an anomaly. He belongs to the past, when the captains of industry were also the direct owners of the instruments of production. Generally, the "employer" has been split into (1) managers, salaried officials, and (2) a host of shareholders, who know little more about the business yielding them an income than the color and stock-market designation of their certificates.

This surface transformation assumes a more striking appearance in case of the enterprise operated by the State. The five "factors" are still there. Labor, capital, entrepreneur, land, the State. But the State and entrepreneur have become one. The new entrepreneur has lost entirely the individual nature of the old father of industry, who owned the enterprise he ran in the same way he owned his cane and his go-to-church silk topper. The new State-entrepreneur takes for itself the ground-rent that used to go (in behalf of "factor" land) to the landowner. Wages are still paid; it remains true that there can be no surplus-value without wage-labor. Interest is still paid on capital borrowed by the entrepreneur. But the profits of enterprise lose the form of dividends and assume more the form of a recompense paid for a "certain kind of labor," for the labor of supervising the labor of the worker, for the labor of exploitation.

Let us follow the five "factors of production" (each bearing its fitting "reward") to the new landscapes.

#### Interest

Since the beginnings of capitalism, its professional apologists attempted to justify the appropriation of surplus-value in the form of interest, and found their task difficult. (There is no question here of the relation existing between the lending and borrowing capitalists. It is amusing to think of anybody in capitalist society letting others dispose of his property without a "recompense," at the market rate.)

The most popular belief is that connected with the general concept of the "productiveness of capital." "Capital"—that is, capital in the form of money—is likened to a living thing which reproduces and multiplies. The Greeks had a word for interest: *tokos*, "the bringing forth of children." (It is preserved in our "anatocism," the legal term for compound interest.) The idea fits in beautifully with one of the distinctive arrangements of latter-day capitalism, where to a large extent the income of the appropriators of surplus value takes the symbolic guise of coupons detached periodically from share and bond certificates. One's investment, in the form of stocks and bonds, is then like a fruitful plant that yields luscious seed annually. This fruit can either be eaten or replanted to bring forth more and more fruit.

Long ago Aristotle noted that a bag of coins will not produce a single new coin. The modern vulgar variant of the fertility theory is that interest belongs to the lending capitalist as the product of past labor. One naturally asks: "Whose labor?" The answer reached after pursuing this "product of past labor" from son to father is "the present or future labor of the money invested." We are back with the Greeks. Money procreates money.



A more "scientific" explanation is that interest is the recompense for "the abstinence required for the creation of capital." However, it is quite plain that the worthies who collect interest on their loans do not suffer privation when they make profitable investments. Such capital is as a rule an excess over and above the amply satisfied needs of those happy people. There is, furthermore, no instance of wealth being created by abstinence as such. Even the pennies of the proverbial widows and orphans who sustain themselves by the berries yielded at harvest time by their mortgage bonds, collateral trust bonds and debentures, will not yield to the seasonal berries, unless the seeds of money are planted in productive enterprises—enterprises in which labor is employed productively — or in enterprises that share with the industrial entrepreneur in the appropriation of the surplus-value produced by labor.

A more modern version of the privation thesis is Irving Fisher's restatement of the Boehm-Bawerk "psychological theory." Interest, says Fisher, is the price of time. It is caused and measured by the investor's "impatience to enjoy." Man prefers a present good (use-value) to a future good. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." A loan is the exchange of a present good for a future good. Interest is the recompense for the *pain of waiting* for the future good.

There is no doubt of the "impatience to enjoy," though it is not true that a man who has plenty will not prefer a certain future good to another future good. The fact is that the capitalist prefers present capital to future capital—just because he can invest it to reap one form or another of surplus-value. However, "impatience to enjoy," no more than "abstinence," will ever produce use-values. All these theories have the purpose of justifying the relation of the lending capitalist to the borrowing capitalist. They cannot explain or justify the role of the capitalist as an appropriator of surplus-value, the product of labor.

Is the position of the lending capitalist any different when he holds government bonds instead of Stock Exchange securities? Is interest less a form of surplus-value when it is collected on money invested in industry operated either in partnership with or entirely by the State? Does interest stop being the product of the worker's unpaid labor when it is pocketed by a small investor? Is it no longer a form of surplus-value when it is only a part of the income of its recipient? Or when the latter gets most of his income in the shape of another form of surplus-value, say an official's or manager's salary? Is the production arrangement which yields interest any less an arrangement based on the capitalist exploitation of labor when the State "trade-union" cuts the worker's starvation wage even lower by forcing him to purchase a government bond or two which will be devaluated by the State-entrepreneur in a few months' time? Something similar to this takes place in "free" capitalism when the tiny investor is shorn by the big stock manipulators at the top.

#### *Land and Capitalism: Ground-rent*

Under the conditions typical of "free" capitalism, the masters of a productive or commercial enterprise, who do not own the quarters and the land which they use in their profit-making activity lease these instruments and pay rent to a landlord.

Buildings, drainage and irrigation works, and similar improvements placed at the disposal of the lessee are capital that is applied in the production and realization of commodities. The part of the rent that accounts for such conveniences is therefore interest on capital borrowed. And one may possibly urge that a portion of the value of these things is "worn out" in use, that

is, carried over to and incorporated in the new products; and that, therefore, a portion of the rent paid on commercial and industrial buildings is really a payment made for commodities bought and sold at current market prices. This would seem to be especially true in the case of dwelling houses, which are rented as "objects of consumption."

But even house-rent includes a payment made for the use of the lot on which the house stands. This payment is *ground-rent*, rent in the economic sense, which is predominantly important in farming, mining, grazing, fishing and other branches of economic activity making use of one or another form of real estate as an instrument of production.

What is the source of ground-rent?

It cannot be a free gift of nature, as Adam Smith liked to call it.<sup>1</sup> Rent is anything but an uncultivated, natural crop. There is no rent in the jungle. It does not even grow by itself on the soil of developed regions. The mere fact of ownership cannot create any rent for the landowner. But we know that his ownership enables him to deny the use of his property to others. Rent sprouts only there where human labor is applied productively. It is small or big in accordance with the rate of the productive power of the labor that is applied to land or another part of nature. It is but another gift of labor. It is a part of the value created by labor when it uses, as instruments of production, agricultural soil, the power of water-falls, the subsoil from which raw materials are extracted, grazing land, building lots and other natural agencies. It is just as much a part of the value created by labor, when it is collected as a payment for the use of sites of dwellings—for the use of living space "required as an element of all production and all human activity."

How does this part of the total value of the social product find its way into the landowner's pocket in the shape of rent?

An agricultural entrepreneur leasing a piece of land from his landlord sells his produce at the current market prices in spite of the fact that he pays rent. And the agricultural capitalist who owns his land sells his produce at the same current market prices though he does not pay rent. (He pays rent to himself.) To remain in business in face of competition, both have to realize at least the average profit through the sale of their produce.

We recall that the selling price of a commodity is made up of its production cost (cost of the instruments of product and wages) plus a profit that is determined by the ruling average rate of profit and is calculated on the basis of the total capital invested, whether all of this capital is used immediately or not. In the case of commodities produced with the aid of a leased natural agency, the market price must rise high enough above the production price (cost of production plus average profit) to enable the lessee to make at least the average profit and besides a sum to cover his rent. The latter can therefore only be the excess of the market price of the commodity over the production price—that is, the excess of the individual profit on the commodity over the average profit. "It is a peculiar and specific portion of surplus value over and above that portion of the value of commodities known as profit." Unlike interest, ground-rent is not a deduction from profit but a surplus-profit.

In industry, surplus-profit (the excess of the individual profit over the average profit) is due to the reduction of the production cost. This is accomplished (1) by increasing the size of the capital used and (2) by improving the application of this capital through better methods of labor, new inventions, improved machinery, chemical secrets. As a result, more labor is set in motion than before by the same quantity of capital and the commodity is produced cheaper. The entrepreneur who produces cheaper than his

<sup>1</sup> *Wealth of Nations*, Book II, Chapter V: "This rent may be considered as the produce of those powers of nature. Etc."



competitors realizes, a surplus-profit till others in the same branch of industry catch up with him; that is, till competition irons out the difference in the productivity of labor that accounts for the excess of the average cost of production over the superior entrepreneur's cost of production, and the excess of his profit over the average rate of profit. When his competitors have equalled his advantage, the superior entrepreneur's surplus-profit disappears and the average rate of profit rules again. That is how the average rate of profit is arrived at in the competing market.

But in a branch of production in which a natural agency, say as agricultural soil, is used as an instrument of production, the advantage of one enterprise over another that is due to the superiority of the natural means worked with, cannot be easily equalled by rival enterprises. This advantage is not man-made. Here the average price of production cannot be arrived at as a result of the general neutralization of differences in productivity. This is ordinarily impossible. The general price of production (the market price) is determined here by the productivity of labor on the least fertile soil. With the products of the worst and best soils selling at the same market prices, capital invested in a certain piece of farming land yields a surplus-profit over the profit yielded by the next less productive piece of land.

Because of the greater demand for it, the owner of the superior piece of land asks for it a higher rent than for the next best piece. By virtue of his position as the owner of what will be a superior means of production (the superiority of which no labor of man can make up), the landowner claims for himself in the form of rent as much as he can get of the extra surplus-value, over and above the average profit, that can be produced on his property.

We have just described one part of the usual ground-rent—*differential rent*, equal to the difference between the price of production of the property leased and the price of production on the least productive piece of land used in any particular branch in which "forces of nature" are employed as an instrument of production. Differential rent is paid on all but the worst land in each class of enterprise. It varies with the productivity of the real estate leased; in case of farming, for example, with the fertility of the soil and the advantage of location in respect to markets and lines of transportation.

But even the owner of the worst piece of land in each class does not permit its use without a rent. Therefore, the market prices of the commodities produced on such marginal tracts too must rise high enough to allow for an excess above the lessee's profit, though he pays a rent. Otherwise, the lessee will not find it worth while to invest his capital in this particular enterprise.

If differential rent is a measure of the degree of superiority of a given piece of land over the marginal piece, the bottom rent paid for the worst piece is obviously a tax levied by the owner of the land on the active capitalist (and all of his kind) for the right to use the land. This bottom—absolute—rent is contained together with the differential kind in all rent but that paid on the worst piece in each class. Capital invested in production in which real estate is employed as an instrument sets more labor in motion and produces more value than an equally large portion of industrial capital. In the form of absolute rent, this difference is pocketed by the landlord. Both kinds of rent are a portion of the surplus-value of commodities. Instead of remaining in the hands of the capitalists who extract it from their laborers, this portion of surplus-value is taken from the renting capitalists by the landlords.

An agricultural (renting or land owning) capitalist will have to make the average profit or invest his money elsewhere. The limit for the small farmer however, "is not set by the average

profit of the capital, if he is a small capitalist (renting entrepreneur), nor by the necessity of making a rent, if he is a landowner. Nothing appears as an absolute limit for him, as a small capitalist, but the wages which he pays to himself, after deducting his actual costs. So long as the price of the product covers these wages, he will cultivate his land, and will do so often down to the physical minimum of his wages." (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 936.) The collection of rent by the landowner from the small farmer can therefore become a disguised form of exploitation of the small farmer's labor by the landlord. A specially intensive form of this exploitation is share-farming. The farmer gets from the landowner a part or all of his working capital, for which he gives to the farmer a relatively larger portion of his produce.

Not only in agriculture, but "wherever natural forces can be monopolized and thereby a guarantee of surplus-profit to the industrial capitalist using these forces, whether it be waterfalls, or rich mines, or waters teeming with fish, or a favorably located building lot, there the person, who by his or her title to a portion of the globe has been privileged to own these things will capture a part of the surplus-profit of the active capital by means of rent." (Vol. III, p. 898.)

Landed property, as property, has passed through the following stages: primitive common ownership; temporary possession by the large family, with periodical redivision within the community, as in the recent Russian *mir*; permanent large family ownership, as in the South-Slavic *zadruga*; feudal tenure, bringing the concept of "eminent domain," both born of conquest; "free" (bourgeois) property—free to be sold and bought as any other commodity, with possession symbolized by a title deed and the price of land approximating the money capital that would bear at current rates the interest equivalent to the possible rent of the land sold; ownership by joint-stock companies; and lastly State ownership, nationalization.

"In proportion as the conditions develop, in which agricultural products develop as commodities (values), and in which they can realize their values, so does also property in land develop the power to appropriate an increasing portion of these values, which were created without its assistance, and so does an increasing portion of the surplus-value assume the form of ground rent." (Vol. III, p. 749.)

It is understandable why from the progressive circles of the political intellectuals speaking for the adjustments that capitalism must make in its continued progress there should arise complaints against the payment of this tribute to a distinct class of landowners. It is quite plain to the capitalist economist that the income of the landowner is due to causes that have nothing to do with his social position as a landowner. Marginal (absolute) rent is obviously a "shakedown." And no one denies today that it is the development of society as a whole—the increase of the population, general economic growth, augmenting the demand for the products of the soil—that accounts for the soaring differential rents. ("The amount of ground-rent develops with the progress of social advance as a result of the total labor of society." Vol. III, p. 746.)

Therefore the spokesmen of capitalist advance present programs intended to correct the situation. Such schemes fall into two classes: (1) confiscation of rent by the State through taxation, and (2) part or total State ownership—the nationalization of the land and other natural resources.

The first method, publicized by Henry George (but already thought of by the Physiocrats, the theorists of the early efforts of capitalism to shatter the landowners' dominance, would impose on landed property a progressively increasing tax. That



way, said Henry George: "We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community—the value that attaches to the land by the growth of the community; leave sacredly to the individual (*that is, to the "active" capitalist; J. A.*) all that belongs to the individual." (*Progress and Poverty.*)

The second method, the nationalization of land appears to be very radical. But it is quite consonant with the best interests of capitalist progress.

Historically the establishment of "free," private property in land (the destruction of feudalism in Europe) offered a basis for the rise of capitalist relations in agriculture and for the rise of capitalist economy in general. Similarly, as backward regions of the earth are sucked into the capitalist world market, so communal ownership, or ownership by the class partnership distinctive of feudalism, is replaced with private property in land. But in fact, private property in land is not necessary for capitalism and stands in its way under certain conditions. The private landowner is quite superfluous in the capitalist scheme of things. "All that is necessary is that the land and soil should not be *common* property, that it should face the working class as a means of production which *does not belong to it; and this object would be fully attained if it became the property of the State, which would receive the ground-rent.* (My emphasis—J. A.). The landowner, so essential a landowner, so essential a functionary in production in the world of antiquity and medievalism is a useless excrescence in our industrial world. The radical bourgeois, with an eye to the suppression of all other taxes, proceeds therefore to deny in theory the right of private property in land, which in the form of *State ownership* he wants to transform into the *common property of the bourgeois class of capital.*" (*Theories of Surplus-Value*, Vol. II, page 208.)

In the advanced countries the steadfast development of capitalism has brought (after the initial onslaught of the bourgeoisie against the land-owning nobles) the integration of landed property with other forms of capitalist property and thus the interlacing of the interests of the landowners with those of other eaters of surplus-value. As a result the movement to retrieve the portion of the surplus-value that goes under the name of ground-rent for the associated capitalists takes the innocent guise of mounting taxation by the State. In France the owner of mining land owns only the surface. The subsoil is held by mining companies only as a grant from the State, to which royalties are paid on the raw material extracted. But in backward countries that are intent on making up in a hurry, under the guidance of their own, independent States, their delay in economic development, the tendency is for the movement of land nationalization to be bold and patriotic-revolutionary.

The economic development of huge Russia had been kept back by the anachronistic dominance of the large class of landowners, served by the might of their political representative, barbarous Tsarism. The immediate task facing the cause of an independent (Russian) capitalist development of the country was the destruction of the political and economic dominance of the land-owning class. Therefore, the revolutionary ideologists of the modernization of Russia called first for "land to the peasants," providing

for collection of ground-rent by the new State in the form of taxes. The breaking-up of the large estates into small peasant-owned parcels would have naturally been followed by a relatively slow process of expropriation of the millions of small farmers. Capitalist development in the economically young country requires that the agricultural population should be proletarianized, made available as wage slaves; that their means of production should be transformed into capital; that the people should start using factory made goods, instead of the products of their own home crafts, and thus offer the basis for the rise of modern industry.

The revolutionary spokesmen of the capitalist emancipation of Russia, intent on a quick solution of the backwardness of their fatherland, acted forcefully to furnish the national industry with conditions making for its rapid growth.

There first intervened an unavoidable period of outright requisitioning of the peasants' produce by the armed agents of the new State. This was due to the inability of city industry to offer manufactured goods in exchange for the products of the countryside. In accord with the political language current at the time this act of helplessness was dubbed "military communism."

The peasant millions of Russia were going to be turned into grist for the mill of accumulation of the State industrial enterprise by: (1) State control of the internal exchange of good, basically exchange between the factory and the country; (2) State monopoly of trade with the exterior. These measures were to be accompanied by the destruction of the rural home crafts, obliging the peasants to turn to State industry for cloth, shoes, home utensils, farming tools and other goods which they themselves made before. The rural population was to be driven to the market by all means available, as it always happened in periods of ambitious initial flowering of capitalism.

In the avowed capitalist countries, the small farmer comes to the market to sell his produce and faces the power of concentrated capital. The latter plunders the small farmer—that is, it realizes surplus-profits in the exchange—by making the agricultural producer sell and buy at the monopolist's conditions.

In Soviet Russia, the peasants face, in the shape of a single agency, a combined middleman-purchaser and manufacturer-seller, who deals with them under conditions whose arbitrariness no private monopolist can hope to equal.

In the sphere of Soviet "socialist" accumulation, the selling prices of agricultural produce sold by the peasants to the State-monopolist are depressed below its value (as considered in the world market). At the same time the prices of the manufactured articles that are sold by the State-monopolist to the peasants are raised high above their value. The State-monopolist entrepreneur not only collects ground-rent in the form of taxes. He also realizes great surplus-profits in the exchange of goods with the agricultural producers.

When the agricultural producers of Russia objected to this arrangement and declared a "farmers' holiday," refusing to trade in a market that worked so badly to their disadvantage,—they were "collectivized." That is, they were put by force in a social-economic arrangement by which they were obliged to produce and exchange at terms dictated by the State-monopolist. The *kolkhos*, the Soviet "collective," was also intended to reconstitute the rôle of the grain-growing large estate, whose destruction, during the first phase of the Revolution (when the peasants took the land for themselves), deprived Russia, for a number of years, of its biggest commodity in the world market.

In the following article, J. Ayres considers surplus-value as it shows itself as "wages of superintendence;" managerial and executives' salaries, and as income gotten in the bureaucratic service of the State.

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# THE RISE OF FASCISM

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### HOW THE FASCIST PARTIES OBTAINED POWER

THE FASCISTS in Italy and the Nazis in Germany came to power in a situation of "parliamentary paralysis."

It was impossible to get a representative government with a working majority. Shrewd attempts had been made to head off the swelling popular might of each party from the machinery of State power. In Italy, certain influential political circles offered Mussolini the opportunity to become the member of a "compromise" cabinet, in which he would be useful as the chieftain of the growing Fascist Party but would be powerless to act independently. The plan was to manipulate the Fascist mass movement for the ends desired by its moneyed and militarist backers and deprive this movement of its sting by having the ambitious Duke of Aosta, one of the influential protectors of the Fascist Party, become the head of the State. In Germany, Hitler was invited as early as 1931 into Bruening's cabinet, then into the cabinets presided by von Papen and Schleicher. Hugenberg, Schleicher, von Papen, the Junkers, the Rhineland industrialists, the Reichswehr, played shrewdly with the Nazi movement thinking of utilizing it as a catspaw.

Both Mussolini and Hitler refused to enter the government "by the service door." The cabinet crisis in each case was solved when the nominal, "figurehead," representatives of the State—the King of Italy and the doddering President of the German Reich—reluctantly put the task of forming the government in the hands of the acknowledged chieftains of the Fascist and Nazi Parties. In each case, those who dreamt of using these movements in the capacity of tools were themselves proved to have been used as handy makeshifts by these large popular movements, and then discarded.

Why were Mussolini and Hitler finally called to solve the national political crisis in their countries? Obviously because their governments were most likely to get the great measure of popular support that is necessary for a government that would presume to solve a deep-plowing social-economic crisis.

How was this quality of the Fascist and Nazi Parties made known? It showed itself in the size and preponderant influence of the two parties.

#### *In Italy*

WHEN MUSSOLINI became Premier, the Fascists were a minority in Parliament. But then the party array in the current Parliament was hopelessly deadlocked and was no longer representative of the alignment of political opinion in the country.

Since 1918, the cabinets ruling Italy—the top executive apparatus of the central government—had been manned by representatives of minority parties. This was especially due to the wobbly, confused anti-parliamentarianism that prevailed in the Italian Social Democracy after the Russian Revolution.

The many "communes" run by the social democrats who had been voted into administrative positions in the municipalities, claimed assistance from the central State. But, in accordance with the prevailing "Sovietist" outlook of their Party in that period, the Social Democratic deputies in Parliament were forbidden to participate in the same central government that was expected to dispense this aid.

This situation did not improve when, at the command of Lenin and Zinoviev, the Communist Party came into being, as a split-off from the Social Democracy. And it did not improve when, with the blessings of the Vatican, the Christian Democratic (Catholic) *Partito Popolare* entered the parliamentary field to rival the Socialist Party as a political organ of the discontent of the Italian peasants and workers. The two parties of social reform—the largest parties in the country till the victory of Fascism—were even less able to get together in the crucial year of 1922, when cowed by Comrade Lenin's perfervid attacks on the "yellow, bourgeois socialists" within the Socialist Party, the "revolutionary" Maximalists who dominated the Party, expelled nearly one half of its membership for being "reformist collaborationists" and everything that Comrade Lenin had said they were. The Maximalists followed literally Comrade Lenin's demand to throw out the "yellow collaborationists" from the Socialist Party of Italy.

(The S.P.I. was, nevertheless, not readmitted to the Third International from which it had just been expelled for not living up to the Twenty-One Points of the C.I.). The position of the Social democratic deputies in the Parliament was more confusedly intransigent and "anti-parliamentarian" than ever before. (Such confusion is inevitable when a Social Democratic Party starts acting unlike itself.) The central government continued to be administered by cabinets composed of representatives of tiny parliamentary minorities, like Nitti, Giolitti, Bonomi, De Facta—that is, by the same discredited old professional politicians who had run Italy before the War on the basis of votes gotten by fraud. It is no wonder that the old fellows began to toy with the idea of manipulating, in lieu of popular support, the fast expanding mass basis of Fascism.

By 1922, the army and the permanent (career) executive bureaucracy of the central government no longer took orders from the Parliament. The latter was really no more than a "talking shop." In its helplessness, it was no longer representative of the country.

On the other hand, the Fascist Party enjoyed at that time the active support of an important section of the commanding cadres of the armed forces and the sympathy and allegiance of most of the rank and file in the military and police organizations. By that time its demands for political power became serious, the Fascist movement had drawn to itself the interest and hope of great numbers of Italian farmers, artisans and small businessmen—the *piccola borghesia* that is the numeric base of the population of Italy. To a considerable extent, these "little men," had not participated before in the political life of the country. Their vote had been in the past a commodity in the hands of political bosses. By the end of 1922, these people wanted to believe the promise of Fascism that it was a way out of the turmoil that was a regular feature of the four years following the World War (and which, of course, the Fascists helped to create.)

By October of 1922, the communes, the municipal governments, were to a large extent in the hands of the Fascists. The agrarian (peasant) organizations were almost entirely Fascist. At the same time, the workers were leaving the traditional trade unions in flocks and joining the protected Fascist *corporazioni*. At the first congress of the Fascist marine workers, Rossoni could say: "Today the adherents of our syndicates number more than 800,000." On the eve of the convention of the Socialist Party in the Casa del Popolo at Rome, on October 2, 1922—the same convention that resulted in the final split of the Party—the "collaborationists," about to be expelled, issued a significant state-



ment in which they made clear their awareness of the growing "nationalist, pro-Italian sentiments" that were turning the workers and peasants to Fascism. Modigliani, speaking for the expelled reformists at the same convention, may have tipped the play-box of history to reveal the significance of the situation when he said to the expelling Leninists: "Fascism is perhaps the party of your Bolshevik Utopia."

A few days later Mussolini was the premier of Italy. The Fascist Dictatorship began to secure its positions in the country.

Like Bolshevism in Russia, so Fascism in Italy (and, we shall see, Nazism in Germany) won power because it was the political instrument of the overwhelming opinion of the population of the country faced with what seemed to be an unbearable situation. The people—the big and small bourgeois, peasants, workmen—wanted something done immediately to solve this situation. The traditional parties, reformist and conservative, were unable to act, being either (like the huge Socialist Party of Italy) made helpless by intra-party confusion, or (like Giolitti's very reactionary Liberal Party composed of professional bureaucrats) too greatly discredited to hope to acquire popular support.

The Fascists declared they could solve the situation. After four years of sharp civil strife, the peculiar Fascist radicalism, which claimed to be above classes, struck a sympathetic echo in the Italian people. The hyper-nationalist radicalism of the Fascists fitted the sentimental and intellectual outlook that was becoming dominant among the Italian people at that time. As was suggested by the manifesto of the expelled social democratic "collaborationists," members of all classes in Italy started to connect the plight of the country to two alleged influences. On one hand, the just claims and needs of Italy, of the Italian people, were said to have been betrayed by the "plutocratic, internationalist" framers of the Versailles Treaty. On the other hand, the opportunities for the internal peace and well-being of Italy were said to be interfered with by persons with non-Italian, partisan loyalties at a time when national solidarity and the recognition of the mutualness of the interests of all classes were imperative.

The situation, marked by the weariness that possessed the country after four hectic post-war years, made prevalent this outlook in the very country where, only in 1919, the Fascists outdid all other politicians in shouting for the occupation of the factories by the workers, the seizure of land by the peasants, and in such "international revolutionary" proposals as an all-European League of Proletarian Nations. We shall see how the Fascist politicians modified and juggled their "immediate" program in order to have their Party become the instrument expressing best the outlook that prevailed in Italy by 1922. Like the Bolsheviks and the Nazis, the Italian Fascists became masters in the land when they harnessed to their ends (ends as politicians benefitting by the possession of political power) a "great movement from below." But it would be a mistake to see the tendency bridled and ridden by the Fascists to power as no more than the reaction of the Italian people to post-war conditions. Italian Fascism, like German Nazism and Russian Bolshevism, was not an accidental but a long-range, historic significance in the national development of the country and the people. Like these sister national revolutionary movements, it serves a specific, cumulatively prepared function in the history of the country, and, as such, it is the completion and union of several trends that helped to create the political and economic unity that we know as Italy.

### *The Nazis Win Power*

THE FASCIST PARTY OF Italy took power after parliamentary government in that country had been practically dead for two years. Like the Italian Fascists, the Nazis in 1933 stepped into a parliamentary vacuum which had existed since 1929.

There existed in Germany a host of parties, big and small. Liberal proportional representation, provided for by the Weimar constitution, put most of these parties in the Reichstag. The Parliament was hopelessly deadlocked in a maze of intransigent oppositions. After 1929, it failed in all its attempts to choose a cabinet that would be representative of the entire body. Bruening, von Papen, Schleicher, all headed governments having the support of insignificant political minorities, both in the Reichstag and in the country.

The largest liberal republican parties, the Social Democracy and the Catholic Center and Bavarian People's Parties, had as much to fear from these minority governments as from the threat of the fast expanding Nazi movement. But even they did not have enough in common to join consistently in the defence of the Weimar Republic. It was Bruening, a militant Catholic, who had delivered the knockout blow to parliamentary government in Germany. And even if these avowed democratic parties had managed to unite in opposition to the Nazi menace, they could not have formed—considering the results of the election of July 1932—a block large enough to create a government made firm by wide support.<sup>1</sup>

Just as improbable were the chances of a united front between the two so-called Marxist Labor Parties, the Social Democracy and the Communist Party of Germany.

It is very easy to become bitter concerning the role played by the Communists in the preparation for Hitler's accession to power. Once the Nazi movement started to loom big on the political horizon, the German Communists acted, both inside and outside the Reichstag in line with the theory that "there is no classical fascism" (what ever that could have meant<sup>2</sup>, and in accordance with the wistful dictum that "after the Fascists come we."

The Communist Party called for the unity of all workers—within the Communist Party! This was the famous "united front from below," quite a logical proposal in light of what the Communists thought of the Social Democracy and democracy in general. In accordance with Stalin's profound observation, the Social Democracy was but "social-fascist" and the "twin brother of Fascism." (*Die Internationale*, February 1932, p. 68.) Severing, the one-time Social Democratic Minister of the Interior, was "worse than Hitler." "The SPD itself has become an active fascist force." (*Die Internat.* May 1931, page 197.)

<sup>1</sup>The Social Democratic Party received 135 Reichstag seats in the election of July 31, 1932; the two Catholic parties, 97. One of the great fears of the Church dignitaries who guided the Center and Bavarian People's Parties was, of course, that of losing the Catholic workers of their "Christian Trade Unions" as a result of any sort of united action with the Social Democrats.

<sup>2</sup>In their choicest "Leninist dialectical" jargon, their seers wrote as late as January 1933, when Hitler had already come to power: "The 11th ECCI Plenum had done away with the artificially constructed principle contradiction between bourgeois democracy and fascist dictatorship and thus provided the Communist Parties an important aid in their fight against Social Fascism. The 12th Plenum demonstrated that a so-called "classical" Fascism does and cannot exist and that all the theories drawn from the history of Italian Fascism about the necessity of a preceding defeat of the working class are bloodless abstractions." (*Komm. Internat.*, No. 1, January 10, 1933, page 19.)

Apparently the belief, or wish, of the German Communist leaders was that things were going to turn out differently in Germany. One can only guess what was in the minds of the "General Staff of the World Revolution" in Moscow. As realist Bolshevik tacticians, those worthies never let their published statements interfere with their real purposes.



"The most important problem in our fight against National Socialism . . . is the problem of a correct revolutionary strategy, which, according to the resolution of the 11th Plenum calls for a *main attack against* the Social Democracy, that 'moderate wing' of fascism (Stalin), and through this creates the conditions of a victory over Hitlerite fascism . . ." *Die Internationale*, January 1932, page 44.) According to Communist theory the main enemy was the Social Democracy. To defeat Hitler, the Social Democrats first had to be beaten. Not much chance of a common understanding here.

The Communists were not at all alarmed about the destruction of parliamentary democracy. Did not the resolution of the Z.K. of the KPD on the resolutions of the 11th Plenum of the ECCI state there was no "principle contradiction between a fascist dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, which is also a method of the 'Ditatorship of Finance Capital?'"

If the Parliament was discredited as an institution, so much the better. The revolution dreamt of by Communists was not going to be accomplished with the aid of any "bourgeois" parliaments, but in accordance with the model said to have been set by the Russian Revolution. Was the Reichstag becoming ludicrous? The road to their dream was being smoothed out by history and the Nazis. The two radical parties, the Communist and National Socialist, sometimes joined in nuisance activity in the Reichstag and the regional representative bodies to hurry up the process of parliamentary disintegration. (An outstanding case, but one of a number, was the united front reached by the two "revolutionary" parties in an attempt to dissolve the Prussian Landtag.)

It is easy to arraign the Communists, but truth of the matter is that the Communist Party acted this way especially because that was the way that suited best the outlook of the many German workers whose allegiance the officials of the Party wanted to preserve from the Nazi and Social Democratic organizations. There is another, little discussed, phase of the matter: the influence exerted on the stand of the German Communists by the foreign economic and political plans of the Soviet rulers. Of that, later.

The blame, if any is to be apportioned, must be directed especially at the German Social Democracy. It had escaped the touch of "Maximalism," which in Germany was represented by the large Communist Party. In the throes of the great crisis that bore down on the Germans harder than on any other people, the Communists could permit themselves the pipe dream of a Soviet Paradise, which was, of course, denounced as a frightful fraud at Nazi meetings by German workers who had returned from service in the USSR. But the Social Democratic bigwigs had nothing new to offer to the starving German workers, and nothing at all to the sorely hit peasants and the bankrupt "middle

classes." The Social Democracy, in accordance with the teachings of its scholars, had always assigned to the middle classes the dire fate of "proletarianization." Well, there it came. The "middle classes" who had gone bankrupt in the period of inflation were getting another doze in the great depression. The middle classes were doomed. The peasants? Doomed. The workers? The social-scientists who did the thinking of the Social Democratic Party could offer nothing more to the workers than the promise that if the Party candidates were elected in great numbers they would do their utmost to restore the workers to their old standard of living.

The German workers had benefitted by 14 years of Labor and Labor-Coalition government. What had come of it? Even the oldest and most tried supporters of the Social Democracy started to waver. By 1932, the German Association of Trade Unions, which was to the Social Democratic Party what the British T.U.C. is to the Labor Party, publicly dissociated itself from the foreign policy of the Party and began to issue violent, Nazi-like utterances on the subject of the national crisis and reparations. There were rumors of negotiations and of an understanding reached between Gregor Strasser, then the Reichstag leader of the Nazis, and Leipart, the head of the Association of Trade Unions. The proverbially disciplined unionized, employed German workers started to look in the same direction as most of the peasantry and the "declassed" bourgeois and so many of the unemployed.

In 1932, the number of the unemployed in Germany rose to nine million. Among them were not only workers but also persons who had occupied executive and managerial positions, small manufacturers and businessmen who went broke when the workers cut their buying. Many of these had already been "declassed" by the post-War inflation. The crisis that began in 1929 drove them to desperation. During inflation, peasants and landowners had contracted debts at a very high rate of interest. The restricted purchasing power of the city population brought the depression to the country. To all these persons—peasants, workers, the impoverished middle classes—the traditional parties, both bourgeois and Labor, had nothing more substantial to offer by 1932 than the hope that recovery would arrive in Spring. Even hungry, miserable people cannot, in great numbers, take seriously obvious nonsense garnished with wise sayings from the latest annotated editions of Lenin's works. But neither will hungry, miserable people take seriously in time often repeated disproved promises and the old advice to exercise patience. However, people in this condition will listen eagerly to bold radical politicians who speak to them half-nonsense echoing the very beliefs and wishes that rankle in their own hearts and minds.

The German people liked to hear the Nazi explanations of the causes of their misery. The hard times were due to the treachery worked on the valiant German people in the World War. German industry was paralyzed because the nation was made to pay reparations. The German people could not make a living because of the intervention in the country of foreign-owned department stores, of foreign trusts, and as a result of the machinations of the great International of Finance Capital, in which the Jews, of course, played a dominant role. The average German looked up with genuine hope when a daring, resolute, young outspokenly "German" party promised it would fix things as soon as it got power—fix things by setting up a strong, working State, which would stop at nothing to help all Germans make a living. All who were really Germans, (so this young radical Party taught them to believe) the salt of the earth, members of a chosen people, a nobility among the nations.

## UNDERSTANDING

*The intelligent working man or woman, who cannot be satisfied with bohemian make-believe and the leftist romantics of the "literary radicals," should read:*

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In the election of July 31, 1932, a half year before they took power, the Nazis obtained almost 14,000,000 votes and 230 Reichstag seats in a house of 608. They could confidently count on the support of the Hugenberg Nationalists, with whom the Nazis played at fraternization as a cat does with a mouse. Calvin Hoover observes: "The number of votes which the National Socialists received at this election would undoubtedly have been equivalent to an out-right majority of the votes of the electorate under such election laws as those of the United States, for example." (*Germany Enters the Third Reich*, page 62.)

An apparent check of the Nazi advance came in the November elections of the same year. But the party owed its support to economic discontent—yoked to popular nationalist rationalization. The conditions for the further growth of the mass strength of National Socialism were not becoming any less effective.

By January 1933, National Socialism had injected itself into every phase of German life. There were the Hitler Youth for boys and girls between fifteen and eighteen, the Young People for children of 10 to 15, the Women's National Socialist Association, the National Socialist Pupils' Association, the National Socialist German Students' Association, the National Socialist Teachers' Association, the National Socialist German Physicians' Association, the Association of National Socialist German Lawyers, etc., etc. "Cells" of the N.S.B.O., the Nazi Labor organization, were found in every factory, office and shop, and within both the Social Democratic and Communist trade unions. Nazi converts stayed behind in rival political parties to act as spies and secret propagandists. The Party had a perfected Intelligence Service that was served by professional informers and party members and sympathizers in all branches of civil and military State activity. Of the million or so members, about 500,000 (mostly unemployed,) were uniformed Party soldiers of the Sturm Abteilung, with special barracks and regular military drill. The function of this division of the Party was similar to that of the Italian Fascist *squadristas*, the "conquest of the streets" by direct action, violence, against their rival direct-actionists, the Communists, whose supposed alien, anti-German, threat the Nazis played up for all it was worth before the German people.

The National Socialist Workers Party of Germany owed its mass strength to economic discontent. It became the party of the unemployed. By linking the economic discontent, a product

of the world economic crisis, to Germany's defeat in the World War and to the terms imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty, the National Socialist Party assured itself of the support of the great majority of the German people and the absence of serious opposition.

It is asserted that the Nazi politicians got into power as a result of the betrayal of the German Republic by President von Hindenburg. (Thus Edgar Mowrer in his *Germany Puts the Clock Back*.) It is similarly said that "the smaller Italian Fascist minority" was handed over the government in Italy by King Victor Emmanuel. The record of history testifies to the contrary. Both Emmanuel and Hindenburg were rather reluctant about the rise to power of the Fascists and the Nazis. But the people that tell us of this betrayal by the nominal rulers of Italy and Germany cannot satisfactorily explain why it was to the Nazis and the Italian Fascists, and not to any other nationalist or "reactionary" party, that the State power was "handed over" by King Emmanuel and President von Hindenburg. Why was not the power allowed to remain for good, in Germany, say, in the hands of the industrialists' People's Party or the junkers' Nationalist Party of Italy in the hands of persons like Grolitti, De Facta or Bonomi?

Calvin Hoover remarks that (before January 1933): "Conservatives often insisted to the writer that National Socialism, if allowed complete power, would be in essence National Communism." (Ibid, page 56.) If by "National Communism" is meant the arrangement according to which the total control of the national economy and the right to appropriate the surplus product of this economy is disposed of by the politicians holding the State, then Hitler's National Socialism is in essence the National Communism that Hoover's conservative German friends were so much in dread of. Indeed, if the conditions that brought the National Socialist Party into being had persisted for two more years—and they did—and if the Nazi bid for power had been, somehow, effectively opposed much longer by Hindenburg's junker-militarist entourage, the National Socialist accession to power would probably have taken the form that the typical German conservative associated with a "Communist revolution." With its social causes persisting in the land, the Nazi movement would have no doubt attained State power in the midst of a national explosion, by which the enraged German people would have overthrown violently a government made weak by its lack of a popular base, a government which for some time was unrepresentative of the population of the country but had refused to decamp.

National Socialism was the voice of all the popular mystifications and illusions that the German people grasped at after the World War and during the great depression in the hope of finding individual and national salvation. The Nazis arrived at State power as the political expression of a viewpoint common to the great majority of the German people. They did not win power through a coup d'etat, but through a popular revolution. And this is true—just as it is true about the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia—in spite of the bloodshed, sadism, race hatred, vulgar arrogance that are the marks and decorations of Nazism.

But German National Socialism is not merely the product of the post-war and the crisis conditions. National Socialism has an ideological past that reaches farther back than the two post-war decades. It is the blood-soiled product of a hundred years of a radical-democratic movement for the making of a German nation. It is from this perspective that we can best evaluate the historic significance of the methods and outlook of the movement and the achievements of its rule.

The next issue of the International Review will appear in the last week of June. It will contain, besides timely articles, a full section of reviews of recent books and pamphlets.

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*Is Fascism A Capitalist Device  
For Checking A Proletarian Revolution?*

THEY WHO PRESENT the thesis that Fascism arises to save capitalism from an impending socialist revolution are nearly always persons who use the terms "Bolshevist" and "Communist" to describe the revolution they have in mind. The movement for socialism, that is, for the institution of the common ownership and democratic social control of the means of production, is to-date still significant. That movements of "national liberation" and movements whose objective aim can only be the modification of existing capitalism are generally confused with the self-conscious movement for common ownership, is in itself a sign of the present weakness of the socialist movement. But even an attempt at a "Communist" or "Bolshevist" revolution, which begins with social turmoil and ends with rigid State capitalism, does not look inviting to private capitalists.

The question whether Fascism in its Italian and German embodiments was the artificial device created by capitalists when they were threatened by a "Communist" or "Bolshevist" revolution is really answered when we recognize the deep-moving social forces that actually produced the movement in both countries.

There is no doubt that the Italian industrialists and landowners did not like the workers' occupation of the factories and the peasants' seizure of land that occurred in Italy at the close of the World War. There is no doubt that the German propertied classes did not like the "Soviet Republics" proclaimed in Bavaria, Saxony, Thuringia in the 20's, the recurring Red Sundays, and the regular Communist offensives to "conquer the streets" on holidays like the First of May and November 7. Neither did the German industrialists, in particular, relish the "general strikes" called by the Communists ever and anon. For that matter, the German workers, even when they were Communists, liked such "revolutionary" acts as little. That is why so many "Reds" who voted Communist preferred to belong to trade unions that were not Communist. It is quite true that capitalists, landowners, militarists, financed Mussolini and Hitler. That does not mean that these "special interests" created the movements led by Mussolini and Hitler. It means that the capitalists, landowners and militarists wanted to utilize, and to an extent did utilize these movements to their own ends.

Did the German General Staff apply to its ends the activity of the Bolsheviks in 1917? No doubt it did. The October revolution cleared the Eastern Front for the German Army. That is why Ludendorff sent Lenin and Zinoviev back home to Petrograd in a sealed train. But did the Bolsheviks bid for power in order to serve the German General Staff? That can only occur as a corollary to the general reasoning of a Vishinsky. And neither was the Bolshevik conquest of power realized because Lenin and Zinoviev were patronized in the described manner by the German generals. In their desire to attain power, acting as instruments of popular revolutions, the

Bolsheviks, Italian Fascists and the Nazis looked for aid wherever it could be gotten. The question: "Who used whom?" is answered by a study of aims and results.

Did Mussolini and Hitler carry on their dealings with the Italian and German industrialists in order to make people like Thyssen secure in the possession and control of their factories and to secure persons like Hugenberg in their possession and control of their landed estates and other enterprises? Did Italian Fascism and German Nazism arise especially for such a purpose? And did these movements finish up by serving this purpose, that is, by securing, in the favor of the traditional owners, the "ancient power" that goes with the possession of factories and landed estates? Edgar Mowrer, who in 1933 penned the fiery chapter on "Buying the Reaction" (*Germany Puts the Clock Back*), observes soberly in 1937, looking back, in a "new chapter on the situation today," that "the rich industrialists whose support had helped Hitler to power soon found themselves elbowing out of the ancient power that went with possession." "Mussolini had duped the Occidental capitalists by his fictitious claim to have saved Italy from communism. Hitler repeated the trick." (Page 252.) Also in 1937, the London *Banker*, a mouthpiece of British "Finance Capital," takes the occasion to warn all good capitalists against the danger of Fascism to good capitalists. And our own Colonel Knox (neither is he proletarian) returns from a study of the situation in Italy and Germany with the alarming report that in those countries it was capitalism—he means capitalists—honest, traditional capitalism, that was duped.

Did Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany save those countries from a "Communist" or "Bolshevist" revolution? Let us trace the dealings between Mussolini and Hitler and their industrialist and landowner backers. Let us see who was the catspaw and who got the chestnuts.

(This essay will be concluded in the following issue, in which the following topics are dealt with: "Who Paid Mussolini and What They Got for It;" "Hitler Saves Germany from Bolshevism;" "Where Fascism Arises;" "The Historic Significance of Fascism.")

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